One Hundred Years of Alberta Women

One Hundred Years of Alberta Women is part of a collection of 200 photographs and biographies compiled and researched by Calgary historian Kay Sanderson.

The collection had its genesis in 1973 when a magazine article discussing the lack of documented information about Canadian women inspired Mrs. Sanderson to begin research on women in Alberta.

Undaunted by the task and inspired by the information she found, Kay began to collect tales and stories about women from all areas of Alberta. The women held a multitude of occupations ranging from housewife to civil servant, from volunteer to wage earner. Common among the stories was an underlying desire of all women to stimulate and encourage a greater appreciation for life and the development of a higher standard of living.

One Hundred Years of Alberta Women is a photographic exhibition which is representative of the achievements, dreams and sorrows of all Alberta women. It is hoped that the exhibition will stimulate and fulfill all those interested in the human history of Alberta.

From September, 1982 the exhibition will be circulated throughout the province by Edmonton Art Gallery.

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Kay Sanderson, whose patience and energy never faltered, and without whom this unique programme would not exist, I thank you and congratulate you for a job well done.

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100 Years of Alberta Women

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Jane Flett McKay

1857 - 1947

Jane Flett was born December 28, 1857, at LaPierre's House, a Hudson's Bay Company post north of the Arctic Circle. Her father was James Flett, an Orkney Islander and the factor of the post. Her mother was Cree. Jane grew up trained in the knowledge of both cultures.

In 1874 she married William Morrison McKay, who was surgeon for the Hudson's Bay Company and who was to be Alberta's first resident doctor. Over the next decade the McKays served at a number of posts in the Mackenzie River and Peace River areas. Conditions were primitive and medical supplies almost non-existent. McKay often had in his pharmacopoeia only three drugs — rhubarb, Epsom salts and grey powder (a mixture of mercury and chalk).

Jane acted as interpreter and nurse for her husband and carried on the duties of her ever-growing household. There were 13 children of whom 12 survived. A skilled seamstress, she made all the clothing for her family, utilizing not only Hudson's Bay yard goods for this purpose but hides and animal skins as well. Legend has it that on one occasion she was called upon by her husband to sew up a gash in a patient's abdomen because her sewing skills were better than his.

The McKays retired to Edmonton in 1898. Jane was to live there for another five decades. A newspaper described her on her 82nd birthday as a keen bridge player and an avid reader who devoured the daily newspapers.

Sister Emery

1826 - 1885

On September 24, 1859, Lac Ste. Anne, a Metis community northwest of Fort Edmonton, welcomed the arrival of three Sisters of Charity: Sisters Lamy and Alphonse and their superior Sister Emery (Zoe Leblanc). Travelling from their convent in Montreal they had followed the fur-trade route to St. Boniface and from there had continued by Red River cart, a seven-week trip.

Under Sister Emery's guidance the Grey Nuns, as they were known, established Alberta's first institutions — a boarding school, an orphanage, a hospital and a home for the aged. Encountering food shortages and struggling with the Cree language they persisted until 1863 when the mission was moved to St. Albert, a more favourable site. They were able to grow a garden in the rich soil there and thus supplement their scant diet but hardship remained a constant factor of those early years.

Sister Emery's special training was in nursing. Her medical skills were put to their greatest test in the terrible small-pox epidemic of 1869-70. Over 300 people, one-third of the settlement, died. Fortuitously a hospital ward had been added to the mission that year, probably the first hospital building in Alberta.

Sister Emery served at the mission until her death in 1885, visiting and ministering to the sick and caring for the orphans of the area. By 1883 she and the other Sisters were providing for 30 children, feeding them, educating them, even weaving and sewing their clothing.

Eliza McDougall Hardisty

1849 - 1929

In 1865, Eliza McDougall, having completed her studies at Wesleyan Female College in Hamilton, Ontario, joined her family at Victoria on the North Saskatchewan River, where her father had established a Methodist mission two years previously. She was 16 years old and, like the rest of her family, adapted well to the hardships of mission life, helping out in the school and playing the melodeon for the church services.

At Victoria she met Richard Hardisty, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was married to him September 21, 1866. A family friend and employee, Peter Erasmus, recalled, "Her honeymoon trip by cart to Edmonton and saddle horse to Rocky Mountain House from Victoria was an event of historical fortitude that any present-day bride might well envy."

After Rocky Mountain House, Eliza and Richard were posted to various Hudson's Bay forts. Among the trials they endured was the smallpox epidemic of 1870, which took three of Eliza's sisters. In 1871, Richard was appointed chief factor at Fort Edmonton and Eliza became chatelaine of the post. For many years she enjoyed a rich social life as Edmonton's "first lady". When Treaty Number Seven was negotiated at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877 she was one of six white women to sign it.

In 1883 the Hardisty family came to Calgary for two years. They then returned to Edmonton and in 1888 Richard was appointed Alberta's first Senator. He died shortly afterwards but Eliza lived on until 1929.

Mary Drever Macleod

1852 - 1933

In 1877 Mary Macleod came to live at Fort Macleod, the Northwest Mounted Police post that her husband, the commissioner of the force, had established on the Oldman River. The house she came to, like all buildings in the hastily erected community, lacked much in the way of conveniences. For one thing, it inadvertently had been built over an old buffalo trail, so that when it rained a small but steady stream coursed its way through the house. But, as Jim Macleod pointed out to his bride, who else did they know that could boast such a feature in their home?

Mary, who was noted for her beauty and her vibrant wit, was also sturdy and resilient, and the hardships and responsibilities of establishing a frontier home held no terrors for her. When her husband, who was also magistrate for the Northwest Territories, rode off on a tour of duty, Mary often went with him. In 1877, when he officiated at the signing of Treaty Number Seven, she was one of the co-signatories.

In February of 1878 Mary gave birth to Nell, the first of their five children; a Mounted Police surgeon was in attendance. Two years later Macleod resigned his commission to become a full-time magistrate. He moved his family to Pincher Creek where he planned to augment his income by raising horses for the N.W.M.P. His judicial duties, however, took too much of his time and the venture was not successful.

Though never well-to-do, Mary and Jim were greatly respected and were recognized by local residents and visiting celebrities alike as one of the area's "first families".

Alexandra Sissons Hargrave

1853 - 1932

When she arrived in Medicine Hat in 1883 with her five small children, 31-year-old Lexie Hargrave was already a seasoned pioneer, having lived at Cumberland House and Fort Frances with her husband, James, a Hudson's Bay Company clerk. Travelling hundreds of miles by canoe or dog sled, conversing with the Cree in their own language and living in remote and difficult circumstances were all ordinary occurrences for the young family.

James had resigned from the Company in 1882, because of a depression in the fur trade, to become a trader and rancher in the Medicine Hat area. Lexie, adapting quickly to her new life, raised eight children and took on the numerous duties of a ranching wife. In the early days she often had Metis or Indian girls to help her. She had a great respect for Indian ways. On one occasion she went to an Indian woman "doctor" in Winnipeg who successfully removed a cancerous growth with herbal poultices. She also saw to it that all her children learned Cree.

Lexie's marriage to James in 1875 had not been a propitious one. James, seriously ill with frosted lungs, had small hope of survival and the marriage ceremony took place at his bedside. In Lexie, however, he had gained a determined nurse who soon brought about his recovery. Fifty years later, their golden wedding anniversary, a far cry from their humble little wedding, was attended by 200 friends — old Hudson's Bay Company acquaintances, business associates, ranching neighbours, government officials, relatives, and several Indian and Metis friends of long standing.

Margaret Morrison Lucas

1860 - 1922

Margaret Lucas and her husband were among the first Alberta settlers to take advantage of the newly constructed Trans-Canada Railroad. Arriving at Calgary in July of 1884, they loaded their possessions, which included a sewing machine, stove, bed, dresser, table and chairs, onto a wagon for the last leg of their journey. Their destination was Peace Hills Agency Farm, a few miles north of present day Wetaskiwin, where Frank Lucas was to be a government farm instructor.

Located on the Calgary-Edmonton Trail, the farm was one of five stopping places for the stagecoach between the Hudson's Bay Fort at Edmonton and the town of Calgary. It took one week to make the round trip. Almost from the start Margaret's new life was a busy one. It was her job to feed and house those who passed through — stagecoach drivers, mail carriers, policemen, missionaries and settlers. She had to bake bread in such quantities that an outside oven like the one at Fort Edmonton was constructed for her.

In spite of her busy life, which included bearing and raising nine children, she found time for her flower garden and had the first cultivated roses in the district. Her home was a centre for many community activities and at various times church services and school lessons were held there. To the end of her life she was an active member of her community.

Zina Young Card

1850 - 1931

Trekking 800 miles by covered wagon from Utah, Zina Card arrived in Southern Alberta in the summer of 1887. Her husband, Charles Ora Card, had brought 10 families of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to found their first settlement in Alberta. The settlement was named Cardston.

Zina Card, a daughter of Brigham Young, worked with her husband to guide and support the new community. Besides raising her family and carrying out her religious duties, she used money from her father's estate to fund many early Cardston projects — church buildings, a two-storey high school and a cheese factory, among others.

Aunt Zina, as she was fondly called, was loved not only for her benevolent spirit but for her warm and motherly nature. Her log home, dubbed the "Cotton Flannel Palace" by Charles, because she had lined its walls with richly coloured flannel, was known for its hospitality, a hospitality that was extended beyond the community to native people, Northwest Mounted Police, government officials and neighbouring families.

Lady Isabella Hardisty Lougheed

? - 1936

When Belle Hardisty and James Lougheed were married in 1884 Calgary was a bustling frontier town of wooden establishments and high hopes. James, an up-and-coming young lawyer employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, saw a great future for the town and was to take an active part in its establishment and growth.

His wife Belle was well suited to being a frontier hostess. Daughter of Chief Factor William Hardisty, she had grown up in the Mackenzie River posts of Fort Resolution and Fort Simpson. Educated at Wesley College, Hamilton, Ontario, she had the formal social skills of most young ladies of the day mixed with a refreshing adaptability and frontier informality. James and Belle set up house in an abandoned tailor's shop on Stephen Avenue (now Eighth Avenue). As he was to recall in a Herald interview: "It had been a little shack but on being chosen for our house it was rebuilt, one great embellishment being added — a bay window. This was the first bay window in Calgary and during its building many were the spectators watching its progress." Outfitted with furniture from Montreal, the little house became the centre of many social activities.

In 1889 James became Senator for Alberta and the family moved in 1901 to Beaulieu, a large sandstone house on the outskirts of the city. In 1916, James was knighted, and "Lady Belle" was hostess to many government officials and royal family members. But visiting dignitaries notwithstanding, her chief concerns were her growing family and the culture and welfare of her town. She was actively involved in the Children's Aid Society, the Victorian Order of Nurses, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, and was first president of the Southern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association.

Sarah "Ailie" Lendrum Brick

1877 - 1947

In 1896, Ailie Lendrum, a high spirited and ebullient young woman of 19, married Fred Brick, an independent fur trader. Two days later she set out with her husband and his Indian helpers on the difficult 700-mile journey to his home in Fort Vermilion, a trip they were to make every Spring and Fall for the next 11 years.

Carting along all their supplies for the coming year, they travelled up the Athabasca and Lesser Slave Rivers, sailed 90 miles across Lesser Slave Lake (a dangerous storm-fraught trip in which they lost a canoe-load of precious supplies), portaged 100 miles in wagons drawn by unbroken horses and came at last to the Peace River. There they constructed a 100-foot raft and, cooking, sleeping and eating right on board, they floated in rather unstable fashion with animals and baggage 300 miles down river to the fort.

While her husband competed with the Hudson's Bay Company for the Indians' furs, Ailie lived the life of a frontier wife. As her childhood chores had been mostly outdoor ones, she knew almost nothing of housekeeping. "I had never made a loaf of bread, a cake, or a pie in my life. But my husband had batched it for some time and was very patient with me and showed me how to make my first batch of bread." Three of her four children were born at Fort Vermilion with a Metis midwife in attendance, "a dear old lady and one I shall never forget as she helped and comforted me . . . 700 miles from doctor or nurse."

Amanda Johnson Nilsson

1864 - 1940

In 1901 Amanda Nilsson and her family emigrated from Utah to homestead at Raymond, Alberta. Their house, built by her husband Christopher, a talented carpenter, was the first large home in the area. It became the centre of many community activities. Raymond's first brass band was organized in the Nilsson home and practised there in its early years. The town's first printing press was set up in the parlour and the Raymond Chronicle was printed there for some time.

A vivacious and energetic lady, Amanda's wide range of interests included literary activities. She wrote articles and poems for the Chronicle and was one of the founders of Raymond's first literary club. Though they had 13 children of their own, seven of whom survived, Amanda and Christopher were always ready to help and nurture others. Five foster children shared their home, and a school for boys who had missed part of their early education enjoyed their sponsorship. One of their more sombre contributions to the community was the provision of free coffins, built by Christopher and lined and decorated by Amanda. Coffins were a commodity much in demand in those days of high death rates. The Nilssons themselves in one black year lost three of their children. Among their more cheerful contributions were the many thousands of doughnuts that Amanda fried over the years to help finance worthy causes.

Mildred Lewis Ware

1871 - 1905

Born in Toronto in 1871, Mildred Lewis moved to Alberta with her parents in her late teens. There she met and married John Ware, in 1892. Ware, an ex-slave, had worked for the Bar U and the Quorn Ranches and was acknowledged among other rangemen for his skill with a horse. He now had his own ranch on the headwaters of Sheep Creek and 200 head of cattle. For the next 10 years Mildred ranched with him and raised their five children.

In 1902 they moved to a new ranch in the Rosebud area. Their first home there was destroyed by the flooding of the Red Deer River and the Ware family barely escaped in the night with their lives. In spite of this beginning, Mildred and John prospered. The herd was increased to 1,000 head. As John had had little formal education, Mildred did the bookkeeping for the ranch. She also taught her family to read and write. When they were old enough they were sent to Blairmore to stay with Mildred's mother and attend school. In 1905 Mildred died of pneumonia. John died shortly afterwards. His horse tripped in a badger hole and threw him to the ground, breaking his back. After the deaths of their parents the Ware children were raised at Blairmore by their grandmother. The log house the Wares lived in at Rosebud is now at Dinosaur Park, preserved as a tribute to one of Alberta's noteworthy ranching families.

Henrietta Muir Edwards

1849 - 1931

Henrietta Edwards was the legal advisor for the "Famous Five Persons", the group of women whose long battle in the courts led to women being granted the status of "persons". An expert on laws relating to women and children, she had compiled and published summaries of these laws, Legal Status of Women in Alberta in 1917 and Legal Status of Women in Canada in 1924.

She had come to Alberta in 1903 when her husband, Oliver Cromwell Edwards, was posted as medical officer to the Blood Indians. At that time, Henrietta, 54, had more than 30 years experience of improving conditions for working girls. She and her sister had founded a Working Girls' Club in Montreal in 1875 that provided meal services, reading rooms and study classes. They also published a periodical, The Working Women of Canada, which drew attention to the plight of these girls. These projects, all undertaken at their own expense, were funded chiefly from their earnings as artists. Henrietta was a gifted miniature portraitist and china painter. In 1893, at the request of the Canadian Government, she had painted a set of dishes for inclusion in the Canadian Exhibit at the Chicago World Fair.

Henrietta Edwards was eighty years old when in 1929 the "persons" case for which she had done so much research was finally won. She died two years later of pneumonia at Fort Macleod.

Jean McWilliams McDonald

1877 - 1969

When they locked horns at a public meeting concerning the inadequacy of allowances for soldiers' wives, R.B. Bennett reprimanded Mrs. Jean McWilliams for haranguing him and threatened to charge her with slander. He, no doubt, expected her to be cowed by his magnificent presence and sorry for her words. He had, however, underestimated the spirit of the woman confronting him. "I looked him square in the eye and answered, 'Mr. Bennett, to the rest of the women of Calgary you may be God Almighty, but to me you are just plain R.B. Bennett, and you do not frighten me one bit!'" Characteristically, Bennett was delighted with this rejoinder and became a life-long friend of his adversary.

Jean McWilliams, who had been in the work force since she was 11 years old, was one of Calgary's more colourful fighters for social reform. She came to the city with two small children, after a marriage breakdown and an unsuccessful homesteading venture. After a series of cleaning and servant jobs, she scraped together enough money to open a boarding house, sometime around 1911. She was also employed at that time as matron for the police department.

Though without much formal education, she was an outspoken and energetic supporter of causes that ranged through old age pensions, assistance for the poor, the unsatisfactory conditions at the Ponoka Mental Hospital, the licensing of chiropractors, the plight of local Indians and the starvation wages of women factory workers. We'll let "plain R.B. Bennett" have the last word on Jean McDonald: "If you had had the education, Jean, you would have been the cleverest woman in Canada."

Alice Jukes Jamieson

1860 - 1949

In 1913 Calgary became the first city in the British Empire to appoint a woman as judge to a juvenile court. The woman it appointed was Alice Jukes Jamieson. More distinctions were soon to follow. In December of 1916 she was appointed to Calgary's Women's Court, thus becoming the second police magistrate in Canada (the first was Emily Murphy in Edmonton). This latter appointment aroused a great deal of hostility from lawyers, judges and police of the time. They contested Jamieson's right to make binding decisions as a judge on the grounds that, as a woman, she was not legally a person. The contest was eventually taken to the Supreme Court of Alberta which upheld her right to hold office and thus confirmed that, in Alberta at least, women were persons.

Taking prejudice and opposition in her stride, Alice Jamieson concerned herself with the real task at hand, namely the improvement of conditions for women and children. Vitally interested in social welfare, she was already prominent in the city for her work in this area. Since 1912 she had been president of the Local Council of Women, a group devoted to such causes as mother's pensions, dower rights, child welfare and women's suffrage. The Council was one of the forces that were responsible for gaining Alberta women the right to vote in 1916.

Nellie Mooney McClung

1873 - 1951

She didn't learn to read until she was 10 and she received only six years of formal education, yet Nellie McClung grew up to be a famous and widely read author and a dynamic and articulate advocate for women's rights. In 1914, after several volatile and well publicized years of fighting for women's suffrage in Manitoba, she came to Alberta. Here she continued to play a major role in the campaign that led to the enfranchising in 1916 of the women of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, the first women in the British Empire to gain this right.

During her time in Alberta, Nellie McClung wrote many of her most popular books and served with the Provincial Legislature as Liberal MLA for Edmonton from 1921 to 1926. Some of the issues she promoted were improved conditions for women and children, old age pensions, mothers' allowances, public health care and free medical and dental treatment in schools. She was also a forceful spokesman for prohibition. It was her determined stand against liquor that led to her defeat at the polls in 1926.

She continued to struggle for women's rights and in 1929 was one of the five women who lobbied to have women declared "persons" and thus be eligible among other things to sit in the Senate. When asked if she thought women really wanted to sit in the Senate, Nellie parried with typical acerbic wit, "After standing over hot stoves and washtubs for all these years, you would think they would be glad to sit anywhere."

Emily Ferguson Murphy

1868 - 1933

Emily Murphy, wife of an Edmonton clergyman, was a champion of women's rights and a crusader for social reform for over 25 years. She was a well known and respected author of her day, writing under the pen name of Janey Canuck. Today she is probably best remembered for her role as leader of the "Famous Five Persons". Together with Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Harriet Edwards, she petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada for an interpretation of the clause of the British North America Act that prescribed membership in the Senate as being restricted to "persons". In other words she wanted it determined that women were persons in the eyes of the law.

In 1928 the Supreme Court ruled that women, along with lunatics, criminals and children, were unfit to serve in the Senate. Undaunted by this decision — they had after all been waging this battle for more than 10 years — the five women took their case to the Privy Council in London, the highest court in the British Empire. The Council ruled in their favour, thus establishing women's legal status as persons. The decision was seen as a momentous step forward, marking the abolition of sexism in politics. Emily Murphy, who had laboured so long and at great personal expense, said of the decision, "It should be made clear that we are not considering the pronouncement of the Privy Council as standing for a sex victory but rather as one which will not permit to our saying "we" instead of "you" in all affairs of state."

Louise Crummy McKinney

1868 - 1931

The Alberta provincial election of 1917 was the first in which women, so recently enfranchised, could vote. It was also the first in which a woman was elected to a legislative seat. Louise McKinney, destined to be one of Alberta's "Famous Five Persons", was the woman. She was elected as an Independent representative for Claresholm constituency, a position she held until 1921.

A former schoolteacher, Louise McKinney had come with her husband to homestead in Alberta in 1908. Throughout her life she was involved in a variety of social and political activities. She was a member of the Non-Partisan League, a progenitor of the United Farmers of Alberta. The League advocated public ownership of grain elevators and flour mills.

A strong member of the Methodist Church, she was the only woman to sign the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada.

By far the most involving of her endeavours was the Temperance Movement. She was a founder of the local Women's Christian Temperance Union; her first public activity was as an organizer for her local W.C.T.U. and by her death in 1931 she was president of the Canadian W.C.T.U. and vice-president of the world organization.

Irene Marryat Parlby

1868 - 1965

In 1897, Irene Parlby gave up a comfortable privileged life in England to live in a sod hut in Alberta. She was to say later of this period, in a radio broadcast, "First of all, I think, came the exhilarating feeling of living where the world was really young, where there were no people crowding in on you with their miserable, silly little conventions and pettinesses and prejudices, and all the other barnacles people grow when they congregate together in a community."

Irene Parlby, however, did not allow the exhilarating aspects of her new life to blind her to the need for reforms in the conditions of rural women. She was to become the champion of Alberta's farm women and was to devote a great deal of her energies to improving their lot. She was the first president of the United Farm Women of Alberta, a post she held for three years. In 1921, she entered politics and was Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Lacombe constituency for 14 years as a member of the United Farmers of Alberta government. During this time she was Minister without Portfolio of Health and Welfare. Irene Parlby is best remembered now as one of Alberta's "Famous Five Persons".

Margaret Birch Lewis

1873 - 1941

When Margaret Birch Lewis came to Calgary from England in 1912 she was already an oldtimer in the field of women's rights. She was a life member of the Pioneer Clubs, a British suffrage group, and had been active in the Women's Social and Political Union of England. In 1913, she celebrated her 40th birthday, gave birth to her fourth child and organized a women's suffrage movement. She also became a charter member of the Women's Institute.

When her husband Arthur, always a staunch supporter of her reform activities, was killed in action in 1916, she was left with four young children and only a small pension. The following year she accepted an appointment as factory inspector under the newly passed Alberta Factories Act. Travelling all over the province she inspected the working conditions of women and saw that the proper safety and health conditions were met. She also, during these years, played a leading role in the inquiries which led to the passing of the Alberta Minimum Wage Act for women in 1922.

In spite of her onerous duties Margaret Lewis still found time for her children. In the early days they travelled everywhere with her. Her daughter recalls, "We children found her wonderfully strong, giving us confidence and much independence." She retired in 1934, after 17 years with the Bureau of Labour, travelling between the Peace River Country and the American border, improving conditions for Alberta's working women.

Dora Brock Brainard

1878 - 1967

Dora Brock Brainard arrived in Peace River Country just in time to celebrate her 40th birthday. She had come to join her husband, Lee, at Sinclair Lake, half-way point on the Grande Prairie-Pouce Coupe Trail. While Lee pursued his homesteading ventures, "Ma" Brainard and her daughter set up a stopping place for travellers. Operating from abandoned buildings beside the lake and then from a log house built by Lee, they served home-cooked meals to travellers on the trail — settlers, teamsters, Northwest Mounted Police and commercial travellers.

On some occasions as many as 20 teams and teamsters were put up at Ma Brainard's, with 40 or 50 partaking of her famous chicken dinners. The charge was, "fifty cents for all you can eat". But inablility to pay didn't mean you went hungry at Ma's. Legend has it that she gave away as many meals as she sold. Since she used as many as a thousand birds in a season, Ma raised her own chickens for the meals. She always had "one in the pan, one ready to put in the pan, and some handy at the door ready for the axe." Though her restaurant lacked all the modern conveniences, she gave hot meals and shelter to travellers for almost 50 years. Whatever their status, whatever their financial situation, Ma Brainard treated all with the same warmth and good humour. "I never put on for anybody, I serve them all the same."

Olive Dolly Ross

1881 - 1970

Dolly Ross, daughter of early Edmonton pioneers, was a girl with a strong streak of independence. Educated in Edmonton, she studied business and worked for the firm of Emery and Beck as a legal secretary. Deciding after six years that the work was joyless and unrewarding, she went off to Montreal to train at the Royal Victoria Hospital, and became the first Edmonton-born woman to graduate as a nurse.

She nursed for a time in the Edmonton Public Hospital on Boyle Street and then did missionary medical work for the Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie for a year. In those days the trip from Edson to Grande Prairie involved nine days of arduous travel.

During World War One she served as a military nurse in Malta and England. After Armistice she was posted to the military hospital at Esquimalt, B.C., for four years.

In 1926 the Women's Missionary Society employed her to run a medical mission at Fort McMurray. Turning an old log dance hall into a residence, office and three-bed hospital, she provided medical services to people in the area until 1934. Returning to Edmonton she nursed at her old hospital, renamed the Royal Alexandra, until she retired.

Hanka Romanchych Kowalchuk

It was Hanka Kowalchuk's observation that the men of prairie communities, by the nature of their lives, had continuous contact with each other, meeting in "beer parlours, implement stores, elevators. But women? Almost never." It was to become her vocation to rectify this situation. Born near Dauphin, Manitoba, she grew up in a community-minded, politically active family; in 1926 she was a founding member of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada. In 1928 she came to Alberta as a district worker for the Alberta Women's Bureau. It was her task to co-ordinate all community work except health; she had 326 groups within her jurisdiction. The women in these groups were from a multitude of ethnic origins and were very hesitant about making the step into community life.

Hanka worked hard and imaginatively to get these women out of their homes and actively involved in their community. During the Thirties she organized handcraft groups through which women could supplement their family income by producing and selling embroidery, weaving and painted Easter eggs. Out of these activities she developed a lasting interest in Ukrainian handicrafts, and became an internationally recognized authority on the subject.

A theme running through Hanka Kowalchuk's life has been her concern for the status and welfare of women, not only of those of her own ethnic background but of women everywhere. In 1936, for example, she participated in a panel on the status of women for the League of Nations. In the Second World War she became active in the National Council of Women and subsequently became a frequent speaker and delegate at women's conferences both nationally and internationally.

Chito Kimura

Isolation, loneliness and homesickness were recurrent themes in the lives of newcomers to the West, especially for those who could not speak English. In 1932 Mrs. Kimura, a newcomer herself, thought of a remedy that would alleviate some of the despair of her fellow countrymen. "I knew a few old Japanese people in British Columbia who could not speak any English and who were homesick for Japan. I began teaching Japanese dancing to these older people; I hoped to change their feelings of loneliness of Canada. I was successful in my efforts as they were very happy to start this dancing which brought them closer to their homeland."

In 1942 she and her husband came to Coaldale, Alberta where they ran a small confectionary store. Mrs. Kimura also worked in a greenhouse in Lethbridge, a job she liked as working with flowers has always been a particular pleasure for her. She continued to teach dancing, always on a voluntary basis, sharing her talents with students in school and church groups.

Now retired, Mrs. Kimura still teaches dance for religious ceremonies at six Buddhist churches, gives folk-dancing lessons for the elderly in her home, and produces dolls clothed in traditional styles. She also teaches Japanese drama with her husband Takeo, who directs the plays and who organizes the music for her dances. What began for Mrs. Kimura as a remedy for homesickness became a lifetime vocation of preserving and promoting the traditions and culture of her homeland. She has enriched the lives not only of the Japanese in Alberta but of all Albertans, who reap the benefits of a diverse ethnic and cultural background.

Antoinette Babin Biron

1897 - 1973

In 1934 a little Roman Catholic church was opened in the community of Beaver Mines under the name of St. Anthony of Padua. Funded and built by the townspeople, it was a gratifying accomplishment to every member of the community, but especially to Mrs. Antoinette Biron.

Antoinette came from her native Austria in 1913 to join her parents on their ranch. Two years later she married Guillaume Biron, a pioneer rancher of the area, and with him raised a family of 10 daughters and one son.

Mrs. Biron's life, like most pioneers', was one of hard work and dedication to her family. She spun her own wool and made all the clothing for her large family by hand. In addition to the creation of a home, however, Mrs. Biron was concerned with the outside influences on the lives of her children. She was determined, for example, that they get the best education possible and her contribution in this area ranged from helping the teacher with the Christmas concert to serving as school trustee.

But most of all she wanted a church in her community, feeling that without one the social environment was not complete. Her persuasive arguments finally resulted in her community financing and building one. The fund-raising activities included dances, pie socials, turkey shoots and raffles. Besides participating energetically in all these activities, Mrs. Biron also prepared many meals for those who built the church.

Betty Mitchell

1896 - 1976

For more than 30 years Betty Mitchell was Calgary's first lady of theatre. Her interest in drama began in her university days when she acted and directed plays. When she became a teacher at Western Canada High School in 1924 she became involved in Calgary theatre, founding the "Green Room Club" in that year and in the following year her own company, "The Side Door Playhouse". She was largely responsible for drama becoming an accredited course in Calgary's Department of Education and in 1935 became the first drama teacher at Western Canada High.

In the early Forties Betty Mitchell won two fellowships, a Rockefeller Fellowship which led to an M.A. degree in drama from the University of Iowa, and a National Theatre Research Fellowship by which she was able to study various theatre situations throughout the United States. Returning to Calgary in 1944, she founded Workshop 14, a theatre study group for graduate students which turned out more than 100 professional actors and theatrical workers.

In 1968, Workshop 14 was renamed Theatre Calgary and became a fully professional group. It won many regional prizes for its productions and was invited many times to compete at the Dominion Drama Festival. In 1980, four years after her death, Theatre Calgary announced the formation of a $25,000 trust fund honouring Betty Mitchell. Interest from the fund was to be used for the development and training of young theatre professionals.

Alice Baird Donahue

Alice Baird's first 11 years of teaching were relatively uneventful. Her schools were right in town — Red Willow and New Norway — and she was paid regularly. It wasn't until she married William Donahue in 1937 that she realized what an easy life she'd been living. Moving with him to the Athabasca area, where the population was scattered and isolated and suffering from the Depression, she found that schooling was sporadic and the shortage of teachers acute.

Although she hadn't planned on teaching after her marriage, Alice Donahue was persuaded to help out. She taught in many classrooms, including one at Assineau, where she boarded with a family of 10 and lived on a diet of fish. At another school she was given a teacherage whose only furnishings were "three blocks of wood, two for seats and one for the washstand."

Besides the inflictions of mosquitoes, flies and bedbugs, Alice also had to endure unpredictable salary arrangements. In many cases she wasn't paid at all. In others, payment was made at the end of the year, but then it was usually discounted or paid in installments. One of her positions required daily crossing of the Athabasca River. "In the Spring, when the ice was breaking up and in the Fall when the ice was coming down, I had to cross in a cage. To me that was always a fearful time for we had to pass over the seething masses of ice that were turning and grinding against one another." In spite of hardships and inconvenience Alice Donahue taught 46 years in the north and still plays an active role in the life of her community.

Rose Pearson Kohn

1900 - 1967

Emigrating to Alberta in 1926, Rose and Herman Kohn lived in Edmonton and on a farm near Millet before moving to Calgary around 1940. The mother of five sons, Rose Kohn devoted her time and energy to community activities. Believing that sports fostered good citizenship, she worked to provide interesting and wholesome recreation for Calgary's young people. She organized baseball and basketball leagues, promoted community figure skating, and was a vocal supporter of sports for girls. But hockey was her main interest. Starting in the Forties with eight clubs and 250 to 300 boys, by 1967 she had 240 teams involving 3,800 boys.

The work that the hockey league entailed was phenomenal, but Rose Kohn was just the person to do it. According to her son, "We always teased her that the person that stood up at a meeting got to do all the work and she never could sit down." She contacted organizations, handled finances, prepared schedules, co-ordinated leagues, arranged for referees and helped with such events as Minor Hockey Night in Canada, the annual Indian hockey tournaments and the provincial hockey tournaments. As her son remembers with amusement, "The Kohn household was always like a train station with no scheduled arrivals and departures. This was at any hour, any day, including Christmas or whenever. I never really did know if she did all of this to get out of housework, but if she did, then this can be added to her successes."

In 1968 the Rose Kohn Memorial Arena was opened in Calgary, a tribute to a community volunteer who had worked unceasingly for 25 years to improve sports opportunities for Calgary's youth.

Margaret Strang Savage

1901 - 1970

When Margaret Strang graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Western Ontario in 1929, she was the only woman in a class of 25. Two years later she was appointed by the Presbyterian Church as a medical missionary to the North Star-Dixonville field in the Peace River Country. When the people of her district built her a combination doctor's office and manse she pitched in too, impressing everyone not only by the flakiness of the pies she baked for the workers, but by her agility with an axe. Travelling about her large territory on horseback in all conditions to doctor the sick and help the troubled, she earned the respect and devotion of the people she served.

In 1933 she married Douglas Savage. Their years of homesteading and of various business ventures were impoverished and difficult but Dr. Savage saw a special virtue to these trials. She was to say of these years, "I've entered by another door — their door — into the lives of my Peace River people. All that we've experienced is the fabric of their life too. I'm one of them now."

In 1943 she went with her family to Cold Lake, a remote village of 400 people, to be a doctor of the small United Church hospital there. She soon became Public Health Officer, and in the Fifties, she had the satisfaction of seeing a modern fully equipped hospital opened at Cold Lake.

Cora Watt Casselman

1888 - 1964

The only woman Alberta ever elected to the House of Commons, and the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House, Cora Casselman led an impressive career in politics and world affairs. She was described by a newspaper reporter as "clear-eyed, brief, convincing, practical and constructive."

In 1943 she attended meetings in New York and Washington as a member of the Canadian Women's Committee on International Relations. She also served as advisor to the Canadian delegates at the meeting of the International Labour Organization in Philadelphia, 1944. In 1945 she was part of the Canadian delegation at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. An article in the Lethbridge Herald said of her, "A woman of education, a student of social problems, particularly those relating to the home and the family", she impressed Parliament with her earnestness and seriousness. It was no mere gesture of recognition of Canada's women that brought about her choice as a member of the delegation to the San Francisco conference. She was named because of her wide acquaintance with and deep interest in world affairs."

Besides her federal duties (she was Alberta's representative on the Federal District Commission, 1948-1957), Cora Casselman was deeply involved in community affairs in Edmonton and was active in a host of organizations such as the League of Nations Society, the Council of Social Agencies and the Child Refuge Society.

Mary Cross Dover O.B.E., C.M.

It was Colonel J.F. Macleod who issued the order to build a fort at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers in 1875. He was also to give the fort its name of Calgary. In 1980, during Calgary's celebrations of Alberta's 75th Anniversary, Mary Dover, Colonel Macleod's granddaughter, received special honour for her own valuable contributions to the life and growth of the city.

Mary Cross was born in 1905, the daughter of A.E. Cross, a successful rancher and businessman and one of the original founders of the Calgary Stampede. Her early life was that of the beautiful young socialite. In 1927 she was Queen of the Banff Winter Carnival. During the Thirties she married and became mother to a son. In 1941 she joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps and in December the following year sailed for the United Kingdom. In 1943 she was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and given command of Canada's largest C.W.A.C. centre at Kitchener, Ontario. For her outstanding service she was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1946.

During the Fifties and Sixties she was deeply involved in the affairs of her city. She served two terms as Alderman, and was a member of the Hospital Board, the District Planning Commission and the Parks, Lands and Grants Committee. She was also a member of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Committee for seven years. Despite her busy public life she found time to volunteer for such causes as the Red Cross and the Philharmonic and to pursue her interest in the preservation of historic buildings.

Alice Mailhot Ross

1890 - 1968

Alice Mailhot, who came to Calgary as a baby and was educated at the Sacred Heart Convent, grew up wanting to be a civil engineer like her father. Her parents discouraged this ambition but allowed her to study architecture. She completed four years of study at the Rhode Island School of Design, New York, graduating in 1910.

When she returned to Alberta Alice found there was no work for a female architect. She went to work for the Alberta Lumber Company where she met her husband-to-be, Hugh V. Ross. Some years after their marriage they moved to Duffield, where Hugh started his own lumber company. During these years at Duffield Alice Ross occasionally drew up the plans and blueprints for the business.

When her husband died in 1944 she moved her family to Edmonton and became associated with a construction firm that was designing a project for the National Housing Scheme. In 1948 she completed postgraduate work at the Rhode Island School of Design and returned to set up her own architectural firm, Ross Home Plans, which specialized in home designing. She is believed to be Canada's first woman architect.

Elizabeth Rummel

1897 - 1980

Until her death in 1980, Lizzie Rummel was one of Banff's more colourful oldtimers. A breezy, informal woman, whose trademark was the eternal "roll-your-own" dangling from a corner of her mouth, she was an endless source of anecdotes and information on the Rockies. In her final years she spent many hours at the Banff Archives taping oldtimers' stories and identifying and cataloguing photographs.

Born to a titled Bavarian family in 1897, Elizabeth von Rummel grew up in a 22-room house complete with servants and a butler. In 1911, her mother, deciding that Lizzie and her sisters would benefit from the rugged life, purchased a ranch near Kew, Alberta as a summer home. In 1914, unable to get passage back to Germany and finding themselves without funds, mother and daughters ran the ranch themselves. Lizzie adapted easily to their new life, becoming adept at handling a horse and acquiring considerable managerial skills in the bargain. In 1936, she left the ranch and went to Banff where she began the guiding work that was to occupy her for the next 30 years. A "jill-of-all-trades", she was cook, guide and hostess of mountain visitors, organizing hiking and pack trips in the summers and skiing in the winters. In 1949, she bought her own lodge near Mount Assiniboine and ran a small but very successful operation, providing warm hospitality and expert guidance in skiing, riding and hiking. Her guests came from around the world and kept coming back, convinced that in the vibrant presence of Lizzie Rummel they experienced a deeper appreciation of the beauty and wonder of the Rockies.

Mildred Dobbs

1878 - 1974

In 1911 Mildred Dobbs, an English nurse visiting her brother in Lethbridge, fell in love with the West. "I thought it was a little bit of heaven." Deciding to stay she became a nurse at the local isolation hospital, a draughty old building three miles from town. Located on a hill beside the cemetery, the water supply was erratic and it took six fires to heat it in the Winter.

Nurse Dobbs was on duty 24 hours a day. Working sometimes with housekeeping help, sometimes with none, she singlehandedly nursed her patients through the contagious diseases of the day: scarlet fever, measles, typhoid, smallpox and polio. Conditions in the old house were primitive. The beds were merely folding cots made up with discarded Mounted Police blankets. Mildred's pleas to the Board for better ones went unanswered. Her request, after 10 years with the hospital, that a pot and a tablecloth be replaced did get her a reply: "There were two tablecloths when we opened. What happened to the other one?" And when she asked for aspirin: "You got them better before without aspirin and you can do it again."

Her life as an isolation nurse was a lonely one. She almost never left the hospital. Not only was there the chance of spreading infection, there would be no one to take care of the patients. In spite of the loneliness and the limited medical resources, Mildred loved her work. "I felt I was filling a need and as long as I didn't mope, I enjoyed it." When she retired in 1951, at 74, there were two things she was especially proud of: her good health (she had taken only five days sick leave in 38 years) and her record of no cross-infections among her patients. She lived on in Lethbridge, beloved and greatly respected by her community until her death in 1974.

Dr. Mary Percy Jackson

Dr. Mary Percy came to Alberta in 1929 as Provincial District Doctor for the Manning area, which was then mainly wilderness. A native of England, the young doctor had graduated from the University of Birmingham with degrees in medicine and surgery. Reaching the Battle River in July, she set up residence and a practice in the infirmary that had been provided for her, "a palatial shack, 14 feet by 20, divided into three rooms: a kitchen, scullery and waiting room for patients; a bedroom-dispensary; and a consulting-treatment room barely large enough for a patient and myself." The only doctor in the area, with the nearest hospital 84 miles to the south, she travelled on foot, by saddle horse, by wagon, and by sleigh and dogsled to reach her patients.

In 1931 she married Frank Jackson and went to live with him at Keg River. Besides taking on the duties of farm wife and mother, she continued to practice. She fought a long and arduous battle against rabies, a major hazard in the north for a number of years. She also worked hard to eradicate tuberculosis, a killer disease among the native population at Keg River. The last T.B. victim of the area died in 1952. Dr. Jackson retired in 1974 after 45 years of dedicated service to the people of Northern Alberta.

Moretta "Molly" Fenton Beall Reilly

1922 - 1980

Recipient of the Amelia Earhart Trophy and the first woman to be appointed Companion of the Order of Icarus, Molly Reilly received her initial flying instruction with the R.C.A.F. Before she was demobbed in 1946 she had earned her commercial licence. In 1948 she gained instructor's rating and was hired by Leavens Brothers Air Services, Toronto, as an instructor and charter pilot. She continued to upgrade her qualifications, completing an advanced instrument flying course in Tulsa, Oklahoma and a float plane course in Port Alberni, B.C., and qualifying for a British commercial pilot's licence in England.

In 1954, while working for Canadian Aircraft Renters as chief flying instructor, she gained Class 1 instrument rating and an airline transport licence, the first Canadian woman to do so. She made the rank of captain, flying heavy twin-engined aircraft and participating in the company's air ambulance service. In 1959 she married Jack Reilly and co-piloted with him in the Arctic for Peter Bawden Drilling Services. In her next position, as chief pilot of Canadian Utilities, she flew a pressurized, radar-equipped, twin-engined aircraft throughout North America. In 1973 she was named a member of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame with the following commendation: "Her dedication to flight, her self-set demands for perfection, the outstanding abilities she has developed despite adversity, have made her a guiding light in aviation circles for others of her sex to follow and have been of outstanding benefit to Canadian aviation."

Mary Owen Conquest

1873 - 1955

In the early days of Alberta radio the voice of Mary Conquest, "The Red Cross Lady", was a familiar one to its listeners. An immigrant from England, Mary had worked many years as a volunteer for the Red Cross Society of Alberta when, in 1922, she became its publicity director. Hired on a full time basis, she travelled about the province, wrote newspaper articles, and made posters, floats and special displays. She even produced a puppet show for children called "The Mary Gay Theatre".

Her weekly radio program was a success from the beginning. An informal compilation of Red Cross news and general greetings, it was on the air for 25 years. When her husband became publisher of the Athabasca Echo in 1929, she moved to Athabasca and travelled by bus to make her broadcasts. On almost every trip she took along children in need of health care — tonsilectomies, for example, or dental work.

In the early Thirties Mary had to have her left arm amputated. In spite of her difficulty in adjusting to her handicap, she returned to her broadcasts saying, "When they cut off my arm they didn't cut off my tongue!" In 1937 a second amputation, her left leg, kept her convalescent for several years but she made three broadcasts a week, doing all her own preparation and script writing. Until her death in 1955, Mary Conquest continued to work for the improvement of conditions for the handicapped and for better health for everyone.

Catharine Robb Whyte

1906 - 1979

Catharine and Peter Whyte, artists and residents of Banff, were in love with the Rockies. They not only painted them, they hiked, skied and climbed them. It was only natural that this pleasure in their surroundings would lead to an interest in preserving the art and history of the area. In 1958 they created the Wa-Che-Yo-Cha-Pa Foundation, later renamed the Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation.

Over the years the Foundation, directed with zest and energy by Catharine, supported a wide number of projects that benefitted every aspect of Banff's community life. It was responsible, among other things, for the beautiful building that houses the Banff Library, the Peter Whyte Gallery and the Archives of the Canadian Rockies. Catharine also personally funded various Stoney Indian enterprises, and countless projects in the areas of art, natural science and parks and conservation. In spite of her overflowing agenda, Catharine still found time to travel, visiting the Himalayas, sketching in Canada's Arctic and touring the Soviet Union. She also kept permanent open house, serving tea to a steady stream of guests who came daily to her log home beside the Gallery.

Her contribution to the cultural life, not only of Banff but of the province as a whole, has long been recognized. Among her many honours her favourite was undoubtedly the one bestowed on her by the Stoney Tribe, with whom she had many years of warm association, when they made her an honorary Stoney with the name "Princess White Shield".

Hope Large Johnson

When someone casually mentioned fossils to Hope Johnson in 1948 the young housewife began watching out for them and found large quantities of marine fossils in the gravel pits near her home. Eager to know more about them she sent a box of samples to the Geology Department at the University of Alberta and received help and encouragement from the late Dr. P.S. Warren.

Fossils soon became more than a hobby to her. Collecting specimens throughout Southern Alberta, she set out to find out everything she could about them. Working with field parties from the University of Alberta and from museums across Canada, she met many well-known paleontologists of Canada and the U.S. In turn, this self-taught enthusiast was recognized by the people she worked with as a colleague and a professional. She has, for example, worked for the Medicine Hat Museum and for four summers was curator at Dinosaur Provincial Park.

Hope Johnson has also established a reputation as a nature artist, and her paintings and drawings have been widely exhibited. Her particular field of interest is vertebrate paleontology, and over the years she has drawn a variety of fossil vertebrates from her own collection and from the collections of various Canadian museums. In the Seventies she collaborated with Dr. J.E. Storer, Curator of Earth Sciences at the Provincial Museum, Edmonton, to turn the series of drawings into an identification manual of Alberta's vertebrate fossils, A Guide to Alberta's Vertebrate Fossils from the Age of Dinosaurs.

Allison Campbell Procter

1880 - 1964

Though she worked hard for many social causes, Allison Procter is known best for her outstanding service with the Canadian Red Cross Society during World War Two. She mobilized and directed the work of women volunteers across the northern part of the province.

Under Allison's direction, the volunteers were organized into working units and materials were distributed to them to be made into clothing and bandages. The finished articles were received and carefully inspected at the main office in Edmonton. Only if they met the high standards of the Red Cross, were they packaged and shipped overseas. Mrs. Procter supervised every aspect of this operation and was rewarded with remarkable enthusiasm and co-operation from the branches under her jurisdiction. More than one million items were shipped from her depot in Edmonton. The Procters were to lose both their sons in the war. In spite of her sorrow, Allison faithfully continued her work, remaining with the Red Cross through the post-war period.

Allison Procter came to Alberta in 1911 with her doctor husband. An avid collector of art objects and handicrafts, she became especially interested in Ukrainian textile and metal work. In 1963 she donated more than a hundred of her treasured weavings to the Provincial Museum.

Louise Vogel Johnston

Louise Johnston, a member of the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame, is representative of the many Alberta farm women who have dedicated themselves to leadership and service through the women's farm organizations. She came to Alberta as a baby, grew up on a ranch at Carstairs and taught in rural schools for five years. After her marriage to Russel Johnston she lived in the Helmsdale district where, as farm wife and mother, she became actively involved with the United Farm Women of Alberta. In 1946 she became a director of this group.

The U.F.W.A. has always concerned itself with social issues, especially those which relate to women and children — education, health and welfare, and the status of women. Among the duties of their directors and presidents is the formation of committees to study and make proposals on these issues. In her 18 years as a director, Louise Johnston prepared and presented many briefs on such topics as the need for a National Health Plan and fairer divorce laws for women. She was especially active and vocal in the area of education, drafting and presenting proposals to various Royal Commissions on education, participating in provincial curriculum planning committees and, between 1967 and 1971, serving on the senate of the University of Calgary.

From 1963 to 1967 she was president of the U.F.W.A. As president her tasks took on national and international scope. She went as a delegate to conferences in Quebec and Ireland. In 1964 she was a member of one of the first Canadian tours to the Republic of China, a tour arranged by the Farmers' Union of Alberta.

Ruth Peacock Gorman C.M.

Ruth Gorman, a well known Calgary lawyer, has two other names she answers to: "Mountain White Girl Eagle", given to her by the Stoney Indians, and "Morning Star", her Cree name. That two Indian bands should choose to honour her was not at all unlikely. For more than 25 years she was volunteer legal advisor to Alberta's native people. Her father, Colonel M.B. Peacock, K.C., had been a champion of the Indians and had defended their rights in court. After his death Ruth carried on his work. Working under Dr. John Laurie she helped institute many reforms in cases where native people lacked civil rights or equal opportunities. Prominent in her career was the "Hobbema Case", a five year battle over scrip agreements with the Federal Government, a battle she eventually won. Her three-day presentation before the Legislative and Senate Committee in Ottawa led to changes in the Indian Act and prepared the way for native peoples to get the vote.

Besides Indian Affairs, Ruth Gorman has been actively and intensively involved in other areas. For over 30 years she was legal advisor to the local Council of Women and helped bring about reforms that ranged from getting skim milk legalized to changing the Dower Act. In 1951 she helped organize the Calgary Handicapped Society for Crippled Persons and was instrumental in developing a school and shop for training disabled people. She has also been a notable figure in Western publishing. In 1965, recognizing the need for regional publications she became, without any previous experience in journalism, the founder, publisher and editor of a small magazine, My Golden West, of which she remained editor until 1975.

Laura Margaret Attrux

Laura Attrux was a highly qualified obstetrical nurse with a diploma in public nursing and six years' experience as Obstetrical Supervisor at the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary when she applied for a position as district nurse in 1939. As she recalls, "It was customary in those days for women to be delivered at home usually with only a neighbourly woman to depend on or a granny midwife. I was promptly called in for an interview and within a week I was off to my first district which was Valleyview. My closest medical and hospital facilities were at High Prairie — 50 miles away and a dirt road as the only source of communication."

Created by the Province in 1919, the District Nursing Service was intended to provide medical aid to remote communities. To the people of these communities the district nurse was an all encompassing hero figure, serving as nurse, doctor, dentist, counsellor, social worker, community leader and, above all, friend. Of the many difficulties encountered by these nurses, including below-zero temperatures and primitive housing facilities, the greatest was in transportation. Roads, if they existed, were in poor condition. Dog teams were used in winter, wagons at other times. In 1967, at the age of 60, Laura Attrux improved her transportation situation by first qualifying for her private pilot's licence and then buying her own plane, a 1967 Cessna 150. It was "a delightful little plane. I flew a total of 565 hours and also acquired night flying endorsement." She retired in 1974. In her 35 years of service she had delivered 1,031 babies with no maternal deaths.

Caen Gladstone Bly

Granddaughter of the late Senator James Gladstone, Jennifer Caen Gladstone was educated in Cardston and in Calgary, where she studied social welfare at Mount Royal College. In 1963 she married Ted Bly, who managed Gladstone Ranches, her father's cow-calf operation. For the next five years she assisted her husband in every aspect of his work — riding the range, branding, calving and cooking for the ranch hands.

In 1967, when a newspaper was proposed as a means of improving reserve communication, Caen was asked to edit it. In February 1968, the first issue of Kainai News was published and circulated to the householders of the Blood Reserve. Caen Bly served as editor of the paper for 12 years. Under her direction, in spite of funding and publishing problems, the Kainai News grew to be the largest Indian newspaper in Canada, its scope reaching far beyond reserve affairs to matters important to Indians at the national and international level.

While she has been a successful businesswoman in her involvement with the Indian news media, Caen finds her greatest satisfaction in sports. Rodeo, softball, basketball, swimming, skiing and golf are just a few of her many activities. "I have found that through sports one really learns to live. Why? Because you learn to know defeat, victory, sportsmanship and brotherhood. But one of the most important traits you pick up on the playing field is how to compete. You have to choose whether you want to be a winner or a loser. A winner is not one who always wins in the field of life but one who gains satisfaction in doing his personal best. In other words excelling to the best of his ability. This philosophy I have also tried to maintain as a wife, mother and businesswoman."

Myrtle Sayers Leadlay

Myrtle Leadlay began her long career in community recreation in 1960 when she became Playground and Play School Supervisor for the town of Japser Place. Enrolling in the provincial government's three-year director's course she received her diploma in 1964. Jasper Place amalgamated with Edmonton that year and Myrtle Leadlay became an employee of that city. As Director of Day Camps, Hobbies and Nature Programs she became acutely aware of the need for recreational activities for disabled people. She initiated several programmes for them — a day camp, a teen club and an adults club.

In 1969 Edmonton appointed her Director of Programmes for the Handicapped and thus became the first municipal body in Western Canada to creat a recreation program for the disabled. There were, in fact, few such programs of any significance in the country. Under Mrs. Leadlay's leadership the city developed a programme of recreation for special groups which has been used as a guide and pattern in centres across Canada. Among the services she initiated were a pre-school for disabled children, an amputee ski club, day camps, and a riding club. She also developed the Alberta Special Games. But her chief contribution has been her continuous effort to develop public appreciation of the ability and desire of handicapped people to share in community life as ordinary citizens.

Mary Elizabeth Munn

On May 30, 1973, Mary Elizabeth Munn received a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Boston, the first blind woman in the world to be so distinguished. This achievement was particularly gratifying to Miss Munn because she felt it would open the field to other blind people and encourage funding organizations to sponsor more blind students.

Born in Montreal of Scottish parents, Mary Munn studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at the school of Tobias Matthay, where she obtained her Teacher's Certificate. In 1931 her first concert at Grotian Hall, London, launched her on a 20 year career as concert pianist, performing across Canada and the United States and in Europe. During World War Two she was a member of the Women's Ambulance Corps in Vancouver, serving as switchboard operator and filing clerk.

In 1953, having given up her concert work, she came to Calgary to begin a teaching career that led to the principalship of the Calgary Conservatory of Music. A charming and bright-spirited individual, Mary Munn has never let her handicap be an obstacle to the things she wants to do. Among her many accomplishments she speaks French and German, dances, skates, rides and hikes. When she decided to get her doctorate after so many years it was typical of her enthusiastic and exhaustive approach to things that she tackled the work head on. Working 17 hours a day, seven days a week, for 16 months often with as many as five readers supplying her with information, she completed her program eight months ahead of schedule.

Barbara Harvey Leighton

In 1935 Barbara Harvey, an art student, married her teacher, A.C. Leighton, an internationally known landscape painter, and spent the 30 years sharing his unconventional and widely travelled life. After he died in 1965, Barbara returned to art college to resume her own long-abandoned artistic pursuits. Studying fabrics and metalwork, she won art scholarships two years in a row, and in 1969 graduated with a degree in Arts and Crafts from the Alberta College of Art.

After a year or two of working in her chosen media and making prints of her husband's work she decided to make her skills available to others. She opened her home, a lovely Tudor-style house with a spectacular view of the Rockies, as an art centre where people could come for lessons in arts and crafts. Before long, a nearby schoolhouse was purchased to accommodate the growing number of students, and other buildings — a weaving studio, a pottery studio and a woodworking shop — were added.

In 1974 the Leighton Foundation was established. A non-profit organization, it provides instruction, on a year-round basis to students of all ages, in painting, sculpture, weaving, batik, silkscreening, jewelry-making, ceramics and metalwork. The Leighton home is an informal art gallery where works of well-known and promising artists of Alberta are displayed. Mrs. Leighton's own outstanding collection provides the basis for the gallery. She is still living and working at the Leighton Centre, practising her theory that leisure activities should incorporate the creative life. Judging by the response of Leighton Centre enthusiasts, a lot of people agree with her.

Marie-Anne Leblanc Gravel

1880 - 1979

Marie-Anne Gravel personified the courage and determination of prairie women. Arriving from Quebec in 1912, a widow with two small children, she was the first woman to file a claim on (or even live on) a homestead in the Donnelly area.

Soon after her arrival, both her children died, victims of contaminated water. But Marie-Anne persisted through this and all the other trials that homesteading presented. She felled trees and worked the land. With her second husband, Eugene Gravel, she built an immigration hall for new settlers to the area. In the great influenza epidemic of 1918 and a subsequent smallpox epidemic the hall became an isolation ward, with Marie-Anne acting as nurse and attendant to the sick. The hall, which evolved into the Hotel Gravel, was an important social centre for the growing community, a favourite gathering place for holidays and celebrations.

Surviving her husband, and their son, an R.C.A.F. pilot who was lost in World War Two, Marie-Anne continued her many pursuits with characteristic energy and generosity. At 95, she and her sister were knitting 100 pairs of mittens a year for the needy. Marie-Anne died in 1979 — she had lived almost a century.

Martha Block Cohen C.M.

"We call ourselves the hustlers. We hustle money all over town." This was how Martha Cohen, fundraiser extraordinaire described herself and her team to a Herald reporter when she was leading the campaign to build the Calgary Centre of the Performing Arts. As of December 1981 she and her band of volunteers, numbering six in all, had already raised $9.5 million for the centre. Born in Calgary, the only child of Rebecca and Peter Block, Martha was educated in Calgary and Toronto. In 1945 she received her diploma in Social Work from the University of Toronto. In December of that year she married Harry Cohen.

Martha Cohen has always had a wide vision in cultural planning and has worked energetically and enthusiastically for countless cultural and welfare organizations. She was a founder of the Calgary Jewish Family Service and acted on a volunteer basis for five years as its Director and Social Worker. She was Chairman of the Board of Governors of Mount Royal College at the time its new campus was being planned and built. Her position as Arts Centre chairman she has held since 1976. "I never dreamed it would take so long — the endless studies and changes." The endless planning, however, has paid off, and before long Calgary will be benefitting from the labours of Martha Cohen and her "hustlers".

Frances Williams Fraser

Her father was Assistant Indian Agent and Agricultural Agent to the Blackfoot for many years. Her mother was a correspondent for the Calgary Herald. Their farm was on the edge of the Blackfoot Reserve at Cluny. Frances Williams grew up on the reserve and learned to speak Blackfoot at an early age. She became interested in the old stories told by the elders of the band. When the elders, fearing their knowledge would be lost, asked her to write the stories down, she began what was to become her life's vocation of recording Blackfoot legends and songs.

After she married Frank Fraser and moved to his ranch southeast of High River she continued her work and began writing about the legends for the Globe and Mail, the Herald and other papers and magazines under the name Fran Fraser. Over the years Mrs. Fraser has become an authority on Blackfoot legends and language. She has written two books, The Bear That Stole the Chinook and The Wind Along the River. She has compiled a 270-page dictionary of the old form of Blackfoot and has preserved hundreds of legends and songs in writing and on tape.

In her writing she has always taken great pains to tell the stories the way the original storytellers did. She is particular about accuracy, and works hard to get the exact meanings of the Indian words in her translations. Besides language, Frances Williams Fraser is interested in many other aspects of the Blackfoot culture. She does beautiful beadwork and is the only non-Blackfoot woman to have been initiated into the art and ritual of porcupine quill work.

Signe Spokkeli Hills

In 1980 the Town of Camrose honoured its oldest oldtimer. Signe Spokkeli Hills, 94 years old, had also been the town's first teacher. When she came to Alberta in 1895 from Moorhead, Minnesota, Signe spoke only Norwegian. Her education began in a settler's shack and continued in the local school when it was built. For secondary school she had to go to Edmonton. Upon graduation she went to Regina to attend Normal School which in 1907 was simply the upstairs "assembly room" of a high school.

Signe taught in several rural schools. Her first school was not quite completed when she began classes and she had to use big pieces of wrapping paper as a substitute for blackboards. Her teaching days were happy ones. According to her daughter, "Among mother's schoolday memories are those of lunches, slates, noisy slate-pencils, the slate rag and its bottle of water, cold mornings, the big stove in the centre of the room and the day the hail storm broke all the windows."

As in most pioneering situations there were hardships and difficulties, but Signe had the pioneer's approach to such things. "Through it all, even when she was boarding in a sod-roofed house, which couldn't keep out the rain and the only dry spot was under the table, Mother remembers most 'the pioneer cheerfulness, friendliness, and will to succeed.'"